

## Disaster Preparedness and Response Program

About Nevada's 2009 Mental Health Disaster Preparedness and Response Program (DPRP) &hellip;

Our Goal: In order to prepare and respond to a large-scale disaster, MHDS administers the DPRP to provide and interlinking, sustainable system between mental health, response agencies, health care, and others involved in disaster planning throughout Nevada and adjoining states.

Who: The 2009 DPRP relies on use of part time contracted coordinators who are located regionally. These staff are supervised by the Chief of Planning and Evaluation.

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Working as a team, these staff facilitate operation statewide of Nevada's public mental health disaster response program.

What: The Nevada Division of Mental Health & Developmental Services (MHDS) makes efficient use of its federal Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) grant funds to assure hospital preparedness and evacuation plans are in place, tested, and linked regionally and statewide. Additionally, MHDS is designated by the Nevada Division of Emergency Management as the lead agency to provide victim assistance during disasters, known as

Emergency Support Function 8-1 (ESF 8-1). ESF 8-1 is implemented upon the appropriate state or local-level request for assistance, usually following a disaster that causes emotional or psychological impact on individuals within the affected community. These disasters could be natural, technological, or man-made incidents.

DPRP is 100% federally funded, using grant funds administered via the Nevada State Health Division and the Southern Nevada Health District. Nevada's disaster mental health program has continued to evolve from peak funding levels in 2002. For 2009, this grant requires MHDS undertake efforts in two key areas:

• Victim assistance/state coordination - This includes provision of direct services to adult, children, and families during large-scale disasters. MHDS employs both psychological first aid and CISM techniques as appropriate. We also develop therapeutic materials such as age appropriate coloring books for children and mental health triage assessments and protocols.

• Hospital evacuation - Staff review agency plans, assists in updates and testing, and link with other regional community hospital evacuation and disaster planning efforts. DPRP assists in planning for special populations especially since MHDS operates some of Nevada's most secure psychiatric hospital facilities and programs.

Where: DPRP staff attend participate in local and state emergency operations centers and using this command structure personnel can be deployed on site at the actual site of the disaster. Using established protocols with Nevada counties, the Nevada Division of Emergency Management, and FEMA, DPRP provides immediate triage services on site and longer term follow up using the existing MHDS service delivery system.

Table 1

Presidentially Declared Disasters in Nevada

2008

Severe Storms/Flooding

2006

Severe Storms/Flooding

2005

Severe Storms/Flooding

2004

Wild land Fire

1999

Severe Storms/Flooding

1997

Severe Storms/Flooding

1986

Severe Storms/Flooding

1984

Severe Storms/Flooding

1981

Severe Storms/Flooding

1969

Severe Storms/Flooding

1965

Severe Storms/Flooding

1963

Severe Storms/Flooding

1962

Severe Storms/Flooding

1956

Severe Storms/Flooding

1955

Severe Storms/Flooding

1955

Severe Storms/Flooding

1954

Earthquake

When: Nevada's program is activated anywhere in Nevada upon governor or presidential disaster declarations MHDS also responds upon request from local county jurisdictions if local emergencies occur, based upon available resources.

Why: Addressing the mental health needs of disaster victims has proven to be a critical component of Nevada statewide emergency response capacity. Since its start in 1998, with the Sierra Chemical explosion in Reno, MHDS's disaster response program has worked to strengthen Nevada's capacity to provide crisis and stabilization mental health services during times of national or state disasters.

The need to address mental health concerns during these disasters became a recognized public health need after the 2001 9/11 terrorist attacks and Hurricane Katrina in 2005. For example, during Hurricane Katrina in 2005, MHDS provided services to over 4,000 children and adults. Since then, MHDS has deployed during floods, wildfires, and earthquakes as well.

As Table 1 suggests, Nevada experiences primarily severe storms and flooding with a presidential declaration averaging one every other year since 2000.

How: Nevada relies on both licensed and non-licensed personnel to provide disaster services. MHDS provides current information, trainings, and disaster exercises (when possible). Training not only includes basic mental health disaster techniques, but also activation of the state emergency operations center (SEOC) and use of incident command structures during field operations. MHDS maintains Nevada's only database used to deploy disaster mental health responders as needed to any geographic location in Nevada. We use this information system to:

— Organize effective disaster response capacity for Nevada

— Plan for disaster response trainings needed in

Nevada

— Assist collaboration efforts among agencies, providers, and other neighboring states

In addition to using our licensed and non-licensed personnel, MHDS trains additional staff to be part of the statewide Mental Health Disaster Preparedness and Response Team. If selected, volunteers are provided:

R Training and education to help prepare

R Toolkits to be used during disaster response

R Identification vests

More Questions? Call or email any of our staff. We would love to hear from you.